

WATERBURY STATE OFFICE COMPLEX DETAILED DESIGN PROGRESS

2014 has passed and the New Year is upon us!

The detailed design process of the Waterbury State Office Complex (WSOC) is proceeding on schedule and making great progress. In previous articles posted on this website, we presented where departments will be placed within the WSOC and the overall design process schedule. Those articles can be found by clicking [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Three AHS departments, Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Mental Health (DMH), and Integrated Family Service (IFS) have completed the design process. This purpose of this article is to provide you with feedback on those departments' experiences in the design process and inform other departments on what to expect as they begin the process.

The overall feedback on the design process has been positive – it's been relatively smooth and not as difficult as many of the teams anticipated. Excellent planning and scheduling by AHS leadership, the design teams, architects and the office equipment vendor all contributed to the successful results.

Recommendations from the first three departments to those that are scheduled to participate in the process include:

- Picking the appropriate members of the five-person work groups
- Communicating the space design to staff, receiving their feedback and engaging them in the process
- Having realistic expectations on what can be included in the design and what cannot
- Being flexible in matching department and individual needs into the constraints of the WSOC
- Participating in the workstation trials and completing the on-line survey form

Work Group Teams

The five-member work group teams were universally mentioned as one of the top keys to success. The members of these teams include:

- Workstation selection coordinator
- Technology needs coordinator
- Storage and filing transition coordinator
- Move day and special spaces coordinator
- Communication coordinator

More detail on the work group teams, their roles and responsibilities can be found in the Detailed Design and Signing Process by clicking [HERE](#). A well-balanced team includes staff with complimentary skill sets and good management styles.

Managing Expectations and Being Flexible

As with any new office design project, a few bumps in the road are to be expected. Having realistic expectations and achievable goals are essential to a smooth and successful design process.

The first three departments mentioned that staff expectations for their new work environment need to be in alignment with what can be provided in the new WSOC. The open office environment has been designed to give maximum natural light, uniform heating and ventilation, provide a flexible space that can be reconfigured as well as a way for the AHS to maximize the value of its assets. Working in an open office environment will be different for some AHS staff who have been in private offices. Open office policies, procedures, etiquette, education and training will be part of this year's transition management.

Of course, not everyone will have a private corner office with big windows. It's important for staff not to be disappointed if all their "wants" cannot be met. Although not every wish list can be satisfied, everyone will have a safe, comfortable and productive work environment. Flexibility is important in the design process with the ability to distinguish between what is necessary to be comfortable and productive and what would be "nice to have."

Communications

Communicating the progress of department office space design to staff and communicating staff ideas, thoughts and concerns to the design team was mentioned as a vital key to success. It is very important for staff to be engaged in the design process early on and to understand how their needs will be met in the new workspace. Email updates, newsletters, this website, the [IDEA BOX](#) and participating in WSOC facility tours are all methods of providing that critical two-way communications to staff. Department leaders are encouraged to keep an open and regular dialog on the WSOC progress to their staff.

Workstation Trials and Survey

Trial workstation configurations have been set up at 208 Hurricane Lane and the IBM facility. A detailed article on the workstation trials and on-line survey can be found by clicking [HERE](#). Selecting workstation configurations, associated options and accessories are an important part of the detailed design process. AHS staff are encouraged to participate in the workstation trials prior to, or during, their department's design schedule.

The take-away from the first three departments design experience is that the process has been smooth, efficient and effective. The departments have been pleasantly surprised on how well the process went. A good work group team, continuous and relevant communications and managing realistic expectations are the keys to success. The other departments who will be engaged in the design process should look forward to an enjoyable and effective experience. Please contribute your ideas, thoughts or concerns about the design process in the [IDEA BOX](#) on the Waterbury website.

Thank you!